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Independence
Aug 14-20, 2005
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Why, one might ask?

It comes down to a controversy over the St. John's landfill, Robin Hood Bay. According to the waste management strategy, all unlined landfills in the province must be closed by 2010. A new, lined, regional landfill site at Dog Hill has been proposed, which would replace all 43 landfills on the Avalon Peninsula at an estimated cost of \$40 million.

St. John's argues that although Robin Hood Bay is unlined, it should be allowed to stay open. According to the strategy's guidelines, closing the dump would cost upwards of \$150 million. If the liner requirement is waived, it could be upgraded to an acceptable environmental standard for a much smaller price and operate for another 35 years.

The upgrade would minimize the impact of leachate, the contaminated liquid that seeps out of the dump. The city claims that building a collection system and treatment plant for leachate would achieve the same environmental results as a liner

without liners, there is no need for government to insist that all landfills be lined.

As for the problem with location, it can be resolved with good planning. It may be possible for the furthest away communities to transport their waste to a facility off the Avalon. But the answer is surely not to procrastinate. St. John's city officials had expected a decision by May, but now Minister Osborne says one will not be reached for "some months."

All the while, tons of recyclable materials are wasted, tons of greenhouse gases escape into the atmosphere, and tons of toxic leachate run into the sea at Robin Hood Bay.

Government maintains its commitment to responsible waste management, but where is the action?

Jason Noble,
Responsible Consumers,
Newfoundland and Labrador

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Association argues it didn't pass up 'free money'

Dear editor,

Your front-page story *Passed up* (Aug. 7-13 edition) paints a picture of a desperate Newfoundland shrimp industry forsaking some free marketing money from the federal government. In short, the Association of Seafood Producers did not pass up free money. There is no such thing. A number of points are relevant for consideration:

- The Canadian Agriculture and Food International (CAFI) program is cost-shared 50-50. Recipients have to spend their own money to receive government money. Newfoundland shrimp producers had to come forward with over \$300,000 to access the so-called "free money." That is on top of hundreds of thousands already spent in marketing efforts by individual companies, in a very marginal industry at best. This speaks to one of the weaknesses of the CAFI program that other recipients across the country have identified, which your article did manage to represent: "it wasn't surprising all the money wasn't spent."

- CAFI and the association developed a two-year marketing program for cold-water shrimp, of which Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the world's largest suppliers. That program consisted of a number of components, at different costs. Once member producers of the association expended monies on a given program component, we could seek monies from CAFI. Again, the association received no free money. There was no money sitting in a bank account waiting to be spent, and ergo none to be paid back.

- The world's largest market for cold-water shrimp is the UK. Unfortunately, Newfoundland producers face a punitive 20 per cent tariff on shrimp imports going into that market. Notwithstanding the commentary in the article,

the CAFI program did allow expenditures aimed at combating this tariff barrier. That is where most of the expenditures were targeted, and where we focused our efforts. Notwithstanding that, the tariff barrier remains in place. It would be of little value to conduct the rest of a marketing program for shrimp in a market that places a 20 per cent penalty on imports. Our hope had been to get the tariff reduced, and then conduct this program. Other elements of the program included developing markets in the U.S. and elsewhere, but the UK remains the world's largest market, and as that market is already there, eliminating or reducing the tariff barrier would have been a god-send.

- To put the financial figures of CAFI's marketing program into perspective, it was for a total expenditure of just over \$700,000 in marketing-related initiatives, for an industry worth several hundred million dollars to the provincial economy. Compare that to the province's marketing budget of \$8 million for a \$700-million tourism industry (not to mention marketing by individual tourism operators, hotels, etc). The life or death of the Newfoundland shrimp industry is not determined by a CAFI program. Newfoundland producers already do extensive marketing.

The real story is perhaps the punitive tariff faced by the industry.

Re. Earle McCurdy's interventions on the topic, he said "squandered ... fell down on the job ... inexcusable ... too frustrating to talk about." On the last part he was right, and he should have kept his own counsel. As Mark Twain said, "Remain silent and be thought a fool. Speak up and remove all doubt."

E. Derek Butler,
executive director
Association of Seafood Producers